



Meeting Date: 10/02/12

ACTION	TYPE OF ITEM
<input type="checkbox"/> Approved Recommendation	<input type="checkbox"/> Info/Consent
<input type="checkbox"/> Ord. No(s) _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Report
<input type="checkbox"/> Res. No(s) _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing (Info/consent)
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Council Business

Prepared By: Martin R. Erickson Agenda Item No. N-1
 Reviewed By: City Manager [Signature] City Attorney [Signature] Finance [Signature] Other (Specify) _____

DATE: September 12, 2012

TO: City Council

FROM: Karen R. Burnham
Interim City Manager

SUBJECT: East County Courthouse Funding

RECOMMENDATION

That City Council approve \$30,000 funding request for FY 2012-13 from the general fund reserve to retain limited, part-time judicial services at East County Courthouse.

BACKGROUND

Continuing State budget cuts and service level reductions

The growing budget deficit in Sacramento has caused the State of California to impose severe budget reductions on a variety of State-wide government services. These budget reductions have resulted in the closure, relocation, and consolidation of hundreds of State offices and facilities in order to be more efficient and cost effective.

State decision to close East County Courthouse

State budget cuts have resulted in staff reductions, reduced hours, and furloughs at courthouses in at least 35 of 59 California Counties. Several County courts have experienced closures of departments, such as the closure of ten separate informal juvenile traffic departments in Los Angeles County. Currently eight counties have closed 15 branch courthouses, including Fresno County, San Luis Obispo County, and San Diego County. See Attachment #1 for an overview of the State County Courthouse Closures through July 12, 2012.

The most recent round of State cuts has also left the Ventura County courts with a budget deficit reported to be from \$10.5 to \$13.3 million. In an effort to help reduce this shortfall, the State decided to close the East County Branch Courthouse located at 3855-F Alamo Street in Simi Valley and relocate judicial services to the main County Courthouse in Ventura to save an estimated \$3 million a year. In response, the City of Simi Valley has spearheaded an effort to keep this 20 year-old facility open on a part-time basis.

Over the past few months, a series of meetings involving local elected officials, judges, County CEO, City Managers, and others have taken place to discuss the potential impacts of the closure of the East County Courthouse. At a May 31, 2012 meeting among the three Mayors and City Managers from Moorpark, Simi Valley, and Thousand Oaks a potential funding proposal was discussed. This proposal would generate ● \$275,000 in FY 2012-13 and FY 2013-14 (for a total of \$550,000) from the County and six cities to keep the Courthouse open for two years until a more permanent, long-term funding solution is obtained by the State of California.

The proposal allocates costs roughly based on population and impact of the East County Courthouse closure. Although some cities are closer to the Ventura Courts, they are still being asked to participate as the caseload for Ventura is expected to be impacted, potentially resulting in delays for their residents and businesses. The requested amounts were determined at a meeting among the County CEO and a few City Managers. These figures are based on a rough approximation of each city's size and geographic proximity to the East County Courthouse and ability to pay for the more distant, smaller cities of Fillmore, Port Hueneme, Ojai, and Santa Paula.

The following table provides a summary of the proposed funding arrangement (listed by order of amount requested) and current action taken by each legislative body to date:

No.	City	Amount	City Council/Board Action
1.	Simi Valley	\$75,000	Approved in May Closed Session & at 6/18/12 City Council Meeting
2.	Thousand Oaks	65,000	Approved at 7/17/12 City Council Meeting
3.	Ventura County	50,000	Approved at 6/26/12 Board Meeting
4.	Oxnard	30,000	Scheduled for 9/25/12 City Council Meeting
5.	Moorpark	25,000	Approved at 7/18/12 City Council Meeting
6.	Camarillo	15,000	Approved at 8/22/12 City Council Meeting
7.	Ventura	15,000	Approved at 9/10/12 Council Meeting Scheduled
8.	Fillmore	0	N/A
9.	Santa Paula	0	N/A
10.	Ojai	0	N/A
11.	Port Hueneme	0	N/A
TOTAL		\$275,000	

Staff was advised that the Simi Valley City Council discussed the possibility of making a \$75,000 recurring financial contribution during a May City Council closed session discussion and included the funding as part of the FY 2012-13 budget adoption process on June 18, 2012. The Ventura County Board of Supervisors approved a \$50,000 budget appropriation for this purpose as part of the FY 2012-13 Budget Adoption process on June 26, 2012. The Camarillo City Council denied a \$15,000 FY 2012-13 funding request for this purpose on June 27, 2012, but reconsidered the item on August 22nd, 2012 and agreed to fund \$15,000 for FY 2012-13. The Moorpark City Council approved their \$25,000 funding request on July 18, 2012. The City of Ventura approved \$15,000 for FY 2012-13 at its September 10, 2012 City Council meeting.

DISCUSSION

Staff concurs that keeping the East County Courthouse open provides value to County-wide residents and businesses, including those in Oxnard. With this goal in mind, staff recommends funding one year of continuing operations of the East County Courthouse with general fund reserves and working collaboratively with Ventura County, Ventura County cities, and applicable interested parties to develop a legislative remedy to retain judicial services at East County Courthouse in Simi Valley.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

If approved, this one-time request will come from general fund reserves which are approximately \$15.5 million.

MRE:lal

Attachment #1 - Information on County Courthouse Closures

Attachment #2 - Letter requesting funding for East County Courthouse

Attachment #3 – Letter requesting funding for East County Courthouse from Simi Valley Community Foundation

**Information on
County Court House Closures
7/12/2012**

Information Obtained from Administrative Office of the Courts

The following counties are affected by staff reductions, reduction of operating hours and furloughs and have posted notice as mandate by the Administrative Office of the Courts. A total of fifteen court houses/ branches are affected with closures.

	County	Closures	Number	Type
1	Alameda	No		
2	Butte	Yes	1	Paradise Branch beginning Sept 1, 2011
3	Calaveras	No		
4	El Dorado	No		
5	Fresno	Yes	7	Coalinga, Firebaugh, Reedley, Sanger, and Selma beginning July 1, 2012; Clovis and Kingsburg beginning August 6, 2012
6	Humboldt	No		
7	King	Yes	1	Lemoore Branch beginning July 1, 2012
8	Lake	No		
9	Lassen	No		
10	Los Angeles	No*		*Only closures of informal juvenile traffic departments in 10 locations
11	Mendocino	No		
12	Merced	No		
13	Monterey	No		
14	Napa	No		
15	Nevada	No		
16	Orange	No		
17	Placer	No		
18	Plumas	No		
19	San Bernardino	No		
20	San Diego	Yes	2*	Closure of Vista and Romona Branch beginning Sept 3, 2012; Closure of courtrooms in North and Central County branches beginning Sept 3, 2012
21	San Francisco	No		
22	San Joaquin	Yes	1*	Tracy Branch closure; Closure of courtroom in Lodi Branch.
23	San Luis Obispo	Yes	1	Grover Beach Branch beginning Jan 3, 2012
24	San Mateo	No		
25	Santa Clara	No		
26	Santa Cruz	No		
27	Shasta	No		
28	Sierra	No		
29	Siskyou	No*		*suspending proceedings held at City of Tulelake for small infractions,etc
30	Solano	No		
31	Tehama	No		
32	Tulare	Yes	1	Tulare branch beginning August 31, 2012
33	Tuolumne	No		
34	Ventura	Yes	1	East County Court House beginning June 25, 2012
35	Yolo	No		
	TOTAL	8 Counties	15 Branches	



CITY OF SIMI VALLEY

Home of The Ronald Reagan Presidential Library

September 18, 2012

The Honorable Thomas E. Holden
City of Oxnard
300 West Third Street, 4th Floor
Oxnard, CA 93030

Dear Mayor Holden:

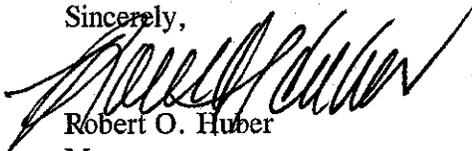
As you are probably aware, the proposed closure of the East County Courthouse due to insufficient State funding of our local trial courts would have significant impacts to cities and residents throughout the County of Ventura. It is anticipated that without some action to keep the East County Courthouse open, approximately 17,000 cases annually would be transferred to the Ventura Courthouse, creating delays and decreased access to justice for all Ventura County residents. Considering the severity and far reaching effects of these impacts, the City Managers throughout the County have discussed this issue at length.

While all of us remain frustrated at the need to once more bail out a program that should be adequately funded by the State, we nevertheless believe we must do so for a short period in order that our mutual residents continue to have the basic right of access to justice. Requests have been made of the larger County cities to contribute bridge funding on a sliding scale based on factors including proximity to the East County Courthouse, population, and the anticipated impacts to the respective city, if all cases are moved to the Ventura Courthouse.

We would like to respectfully request that the City of Oxnard commit to a contribution of no more than \$30,000 for each of the next two fiscal years, in bridge funding to keep the East County Courthouse open. This funding will allow for services at the Courthouse to continue while representatives from the Board of Supervisors, County CEO's Office, District Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Department, the courts, and the City of Simi Valley work toward the implementation of a long-term solution to maintain the East County Courthouse's operations and relieve all of the County of an overcrowded situation in Ventura. The bridge funding requests have been approved unanimously by all the cities thus far, and with Oxnard's commitment, the total bridge funding required of \$275,000 per year, will be achieved.

I understand that you will be considering this matter during your City Council meeting on Tuesday, September 25, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. and we respectfully request that you approve the allocation of \$30,000 to keep the East County Courthouse open.

Sincerely,



Robert O. Huber
Mayor

cc: City Council
City Manager
City Attorney

Bob Huber, Mayor Barbra Williamson, Mayor Pro Tem Glen T. Becerra, Council Member Steven T. Sojka, Council Member Mike Judge, Council Member

2929 Tapo Canyon Road, Simi Valley, CA 93063-2199 805.583.6700 www.simivalley.org

ATTACHMENT 2
PAGE 1 OF 1

BOARD OFFICERS

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Kathy Weiner, Secretary
TCR Medical
Pat Abruzzese, Vice Chair
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McDonalds
Scott Santino, Past Chair
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Jonathan Kurohara, M.D.
Alamo Medical Group
Laura Magness
Simi Valley Hospital
Terry Marvin
TBM Associates
Greg Seymour
Seymour Solutions
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City of Simi Valley
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Troop Reel Estate
Jim Vigdor
Alcoa Fastening Systems
Sue Waggoner
Mark Daniels Photography
Paula Williams
NumberCrunchers
Joanne Abruzzese
Foundation Administrator



P.O. Box 1164
Simi Valley, CA 93062
Phone: (800) 342-9953

September 20, 2012

Mayor Dr. Thomas Holden
Councilmembers, City of Oxnard
City Clerk's Office
300 West 3rd Street
Oxnard, CA 93030

Dear Mayor Holden and Councilmembers:

This is written on behalf of the Simi Valley Community Foundation, a local non-profit charitable 501(c)(3) corporation dedicated to providing on-going charitable support to address the humanitarian needs of our community, to ask for your support in voting to approve a resolution for the City of Oxnard to contribute to the funding of the East County Courthouse.

The loss of the Courthouse and its services will severely impact the East County of Ventura, the City of Simi Valley and the City of Oxnard. For years our citizens have been able to seek self-help, process traffic tickets, small claims actions, unlawful detainers, family law matters and civil cases here in Simi Valley. Now half of those services have been taken away and we are seeking funding to maintain limited services for traffic court, small claims and unlawful detainers. Please follow the other local cities in the County and support this request.

Impact on the City of Oxnard

On any given day, there are hundreds of cases on calendar in the courtrooms here in Ventura County. When the East County Courthouse was fully functioning, all of the people who attended to those cases, the court staff, parties, witnesses and/or attorneys traveled to Simi Valley. Now, with the shut-down of almost all the courtrooms in the East County, those people travel north through Oxnard on the 101 Freeway to go to Ventura.

A complete shut-down of the East County Courthouse will not only impact the roads, there will be an impact on the Ventura Courthouse as more people will be concentrated in one place, parking will be an issue and will only cause further delays in justice. This will have a debilitating impact on every resident in the County.

Impact on the East County

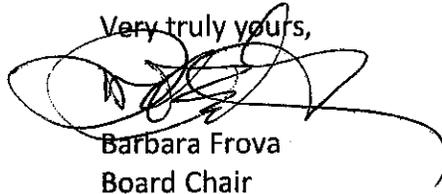
The residents of Simi Valley, Moorpark, Thousand Oaks and Westlake Village along with those in the unincorporated areas nearby rely upon the East County Courthouse to meet their legal needs. The Courthouses only operate during the business day. The loss of the East County Courthouse will burden many of our residents who live in Simi Valley but work in Los Angeles County. It will also be a burden to older residents in the area who are not able to drive long distances.

With respect to the Foundation specifically, which has a goal to open a facility to house multiple charitable and human services agencies "under one roof" in the Simi Valley Community, the loss of the East County Courthouse will impact many of the people the human service agencies hope to serve "under one roof." People in need require easy access to legal self-help, to the courthouse and related legal services. Requiring them to go to Ventura will only add to their burdens in a time of need.

Conclusion

Please consider that every other city in the County has supported the funding to keep the East County Courthouse open at least to a limited extent. If the Courthouse closes completely it may never be reopened which will be a terrible loss to this community and the County as a whole.
Thank you for your time.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barbara Frova', is written over a circular stamp or seal. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Barbara Frova
Board Chair